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THE
TRIAL
OF
MRS. MARY REED,
CHARGED WITH
POISONING HER HUSBAND,

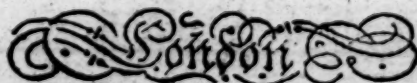
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AT
BERKELEY, in GLOUCESTERSHIRE, in April, 1794.

WHICH WAS TRIED
BEFORE MR. JUSTICE LAWRENCE, AT GLOUCESTER
ASSIZES, ON MONDAY, MARCH 28, 1796.

INCLUDING THE
EVIDENCE OF R. EDGAR AND M. FOOT,
GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF A CRIMINAL INTERCOURSE BETWEEN
EDGAR AND MRS. REED, DURING MR. REED'S LIFE.

ALSO,
Authentic Copies of the Letters, &c. produced in Court, and the
written Defence of the Prisoner.



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1796.

[PRICE—SIX PENCE.]



THE TRIAL

OF

MRS. MARY REED.

THIS remarkable trial, which has so much engaged public attention, for some time past, came on at Gloucester, on Monday, March 28, 1796, before Mr. Justice Lawrence, and a Special Jury.* It began in the morning and lasted Seventeen Hours.

The Jury being impannelled, the indictment was read, which, in substance, charged her—That she, Mary Reed, had been concerned with her brother, — Watkins, since dead, in having procured and administered poison to her husband, W. Reed, Esq. at Swanley, in the parish of Berkeley, Gloucestershire, in May, 1794, and which poison had been the cause of his death.

To this indictment the prisoner pleaded—Not Guilty. The case was then opened by the Counsel for the prosecution, who, after stating the material circumstances, proceeded to call witnesses to establish the charge.

Mr. JOHN HUIS, and Mr. RICHARD EVANS, were first called, who proved the marriage of Mr. Reed, to Miss Mary Watkins, at Pembridge, in Herefordshire, on the 13th of June, 1789.

ROBERT EDGAR.

Q. What age are you?—A. Between one and two and twenty.

Q. Where did you become acquainted with the late Mr. Reed?—A. At Poole.

Q. At what time?—A. I believe it was about July, 1793, or 1794.

Q. When Mr. Reed came to Poole, where did you lodge?—A. At a Miss Corbyn's.

* Mrs. Reed was taken into custody in consequence of some circumstances which occurred in the examination of one of the witnesses during the trial of an action brought by her against the Royal Assurance Company, for the recovery of the sum insured on Mr. Reed's life.

Q. How long was you at Poole before Mr. Reed came?—A. I had been there some months.

Q. Where did Mr. Reed lodge?—A. In the same house I did.

Q. Did they all come together?—A. Mr. Reed came first, and Mrs. Reed came a short time after, and brought one child.

Q. Did they continue at Mr. Corbyn's?—A. They went to another house, and by Mr. Reed's desire I went with them.

Q. How many was in the family?—Mr. and Mrs. Reed, one child, and Mary Foot the servant.

Q. When did Watkins come there?—A. I cannot tell.

Q. While you was at the house, did Mr. Reed go from home?—A. He did.

Q. How long was he absent?—A. More than three weeks.

Q. Before Mr. Reed went from home, was Watkins there?—A. He was.

Q. How long did Watkins stay at Poole?—A. As long as Mr. Reed did.

Q. Did you hear about going a journey to Wales?—A. Mrs. Reed and Watkins talked about it.

Q. When was this?—A. About the time I talked of going into the Dorsetshire militia.

Q. Did they say any thing of your going with them?—A. Watkins and Mrs. Reed did, and I agreed to go with them; but Mr. Reed objected to it, on account of the expence of the journey.

Q. What passed after this?—A. I had a conversation with Mrs. Reed and Watkins, about our writing to each other; and it was agreed, that when settled in a convenient place, they would write to me, to the care of my brother, and would in that letter inform me how to direct to them.

Q. What conversation did you have after this with Mrs. Reed?—A. She said, that when Mr. Reed went to London, she would come and see me, and would bring Watkins with her.

Q. Was Watkins present when this conversation passed?—A. I believe he was.

Q. Was no more said at that time?—A. Yes; Mrs.

Reed said, that after Mr. Reed's death we should be married ; she said Mr. Reed would not live long, as he had a disorder which the physicians, whom he had often consulted, thought incurable.

Q. Was Watkins present at this time ?—A. I cannot now recollect.

Q. Did you ever hear Watkins say any thing about poison ?—A. He applied to me to get him some arsenic.

Q. Was Mrs. Reed present ?—A. I believe she was.

Q. What did he say he would do with the arsenic ?—A. He said he would give Mr. Reed some, and would boil it in water ; that he had often tried it on dogs.

Q. Did you say any thing to him ?—A. I told him that if I knew any one talk of such a crime, I would reveal it.

Q. Did Mrs. Reed say any thing ?—A. I cannot now recollect that she did.

Q. What other conversation passed ?—A. Watkins asked Mrs. Reed, what she would give him ? she said 100l. He also asked me, what I would give him ; I said I would give him 100l. when I came of age.

Q. When was he to have this money ?—A. It was when I was married to her ; and Watkins said, if Mr. Reed did not die soon, he would destroy him.

Q. Are you sure you were all three together at that time ?—A. We were.

Q. What passed after this ?—A. Another time when I came into the parlour, Mrs. Reed said to me, " What do you think Watkins has been saying ? " I said I could not tell. He has been proposing (said she) to go out in a boat, and that he would take Mr. Reed with him ; and if I would go with him, he would throw Mr. Reed overboard and drown him : it therefore would be thought that he fell overboard, and we could not save him : and Mrs. Reed said, that all sins would be forgiven, except the sin against the Holy Ghost. I said I would not have any thing to do with it.

Q. Had you any other conversation ?—A. At another time, when talking about the 100l. Watkins said, suppose Mr. Reed was to die in twelve months, six months, or before he gets to his journey's end, what will you give me then ? Mrs. Reed replied, that she would give him

tool, and I said I would give him another when I came of age.

Q. Did Watkins say any more?—A. Yes; he said, she shall be yours, and if he does not die at that time I will destroy him.

Q. When was this conversation?—A. I believe it was after Mr. Reed's return from London.

Q. Did you hear any thing of a fortune-teller?—A. I believe both of them said, that a fortune-teller, procured by Mary Foot, the servant maid, had said, that Mr. Reed would not live long.

Q. Was any thing said about laudanum?—A. I used to take laudanum, and was going to take a larger dose, when Mrs. Reed snatched the bottle from me, and said she would buy half a pint and take it, if I took any more.

Q. Had you ever any quarrel with Mr. Reed?—A. Yes; on a Sunday, a short time before he left Poole, he came into the room, and desired me to quit the house; I desired to have the bill for my board; Mr. Watkins made it out, and carried it to my guardian, Mr. Rider; Mr. Reed also told me it would be inconvenient for me to continue with him beyond a certain day.

Q. You say the quarrel was on a Sunday?—A. It was; after dinner Mr. Reed left the room, and Mr. Reed asked me to drink a glass of beer; Mrs. Reed came in soon after, and some words arose about a pair of gloves; in the course of the quarrel, Mr. Reed said he had great reason to suspect Mrs. Reed was false to him with me; he called me a scoundrel, and bid me quit the house.

Q. Did Mrs. Reed make any reply?—A. She said it was merely his suspicion; he struck me; Watkins interfered, and put an end to it; and it was agreed upon, while Mr. Reed was there, that I should leave the house that afternoon.

Q. Did you see Mrs. Reed before you left the house?—A. I met her in the passage, and it was agreed upon, that I should be let in, after Mr. Reed was in bed.

Q. Did you go to Mr. Reed's?—A. I went the same evening; Watkins was standing at the door; he looked out and beckoned to me, and I went into the house into the parlour, where I found Mrs. Reed.

Q. How long did you stop there?—A. I staid there all night, and went away in the morning, before Mr. Reed was up; I believe he did not know I was there.

Q. Did Mr. Reed never see you, at any of the times you was there?—A. He did not, tho' he might once, if he had looked, as I was in a little room.

Q. At whose house did you lodge when you left Mr. Reed's?—A. At a Mr. Rules.

Q. Did you ever see Mrs. Reed write?—A. I have; (the letter was shewn him*) this I believe to be her handwriting; about the 9th or 10th of April, I wrote an answer to it; the directions I believe to be Watkin's writing, but will not be positive.

CROSS EXAMINATION.

Q. Did you promise to marry Mrs. Reed, if her husband died?—A. I intended, if Mr. Reed had died, to have married the Lady, but I never was concerned in any plan to destroy him.

Q. What was Watkins to have the 100l. for?—A. The hundred pounds I was to give him, was to support him.

Q. Was you not taken up in London?—A. I was and committed to Tothill-fields Bridewell.

Q. What Justice was you taken before?—A. Mr. Addington.

Q. What promise did Mr. Reed make to you, if you would come to Gloucester, and give evidence against Mrs. Reed?—A. He said he would become one of my bondsmen, and I should have my liberty.

Q. What other promises did he make you?—A. I cannot recollect.

* The following letter was produced, sent by Mrs. Reed, directed to Mr. Robert Edgar, at Mr. Campbell's, Poole, Dorsetshire.

Berkeley, April 5, 1794.

MY EVER DEAR EDGAR,

I NOW write you to inform you of my safe arrival here, on Wednesday evening last. I could not write before, having been detained here ever since Mr. Reed was taken ill on his journey. The faculty attend him daily—I doubt he will not be able to go further or live long. My dear Edgar, send me a long letter, also about Molly. When I passed you on the road, my dear Edgar, what would I have given to have spoke to you. Let me know if you are in the same mind as when I saw you last. M.

Q. Recollect yourself, and tell what promises were made ; was you not to tell about poison ?—A. I was asked about it

Q. Was you not promised to be provided for ?—A. I do not recollect.

Q. Where was you taken ?—A. At Guildford, in April, 1794, and was discharged in August.

Q. Did Mr. Reed come and see you ?—A. He did often, and asked about the poison,

MARY FOOT.

Q. Did you ever live in Mr. Reed's family ?—A. I did.

Q. Where ?—A. At Poole, the time Mr. Reed lived there.

Q. How long did you live with them ?—A. Between five and six months.

Q. Did you know Edgar ?—A. I did.

Q. When did he come to live at you master's ?—A. It was either the same night, or the night before I went to the house ; but I cannot be certain,

Q. Was Mr. Reed in good health while you lived with him ?—A. He was in very good health, he was ill but once, with a cold.

Q. Did you ever hear any words pass between Mr. Reed and his wife ?—A. Never but once ; Mrs. Reed's behaviour before the quarrel was very good ; Mr. Reed was very fond of her.

Q. Did you observe Edgar's and Mrs. Reed's behaviour ?—A. They behaved very well together at first, but were often alone.

Q. In what parts of the house did you see them ?—A. I have seen them in the parlour, and sometimes in the bedchamber ; he was sometimes sitting on Mrs. Reed's knee, and sometimes she was sitting on his ; at first Mrs. Reed and her husband went to bed together, but afterwards she staid up.

Q. Who sat up with her ?—A. Sometimes Mr. Edgar, and sometimes her brother ; I have seen them together, night and morning, frequently when Mr. Reed was out of town.

Q. Did you observe their behaviour while Mr. Reed

was absent from home?—A. I saw Edgar go into her bed-chamber at night, and come out in the morning.

Q. Were there any more servants in the house?—A. I was the only one.

Q. Did you observe whether Edgar's bed had been laid in?—A. I never went in but once, and then I observed that his bed was not tumbled.

Q. Was Watkins there when you went first?—A. He did not come there till a month, six weeks, or two months, after I entered the house.

Q. Did you ever mention the behaviour of Mrs. Reed and Edgar?—A. I did tell Watkins of it, and declared that I would tell Mr. Reed; Watkins begged me not to do it, as it would be the means of parting man and wife.

Q. What was Watkin's appearance, when he came to the house first?—A. He appeared like a common servant.

Q. How long did you live with Mrs. Reed after you observed her behaviour?—A. After some time observing the behaviour of Mrs. Reed and Edgar, I gave her a month's warning; she told me that I should forfeit a year's wages if I went.

Q. Do you remember telling Mrs. Reed of a cunning-woman?—A. I never heard of such a person.

Q. What never hear of her going to a fortune-teller?—A. I heard her say that she had been to a fortune-teller, who had informed her that she would bury her husband, but did not say when.

Q. Did you hear from Mrs. Reed after she left Poole?—A. I did.

Q. Can you write?—A. I can read, but not write.

Q. Did you ever see Mrs. Reed write?—A. I did most market days, as she put down what every thing cost.

CROSS EXAMINATION.

Q. You say you cannot write, did you not send to Mrs. Reed a letter?—A. I employed a person to write to Mrs. Reed. (here a letter was shewn her, but she declared she knew nothing of it).

Q. Have you not tendered your service to her a second time?—A. I have not.

Q. Was you the only servant?—A. I was.

Q. What wages was you to have?—A. Six guineas a year.

Q. Where have you lived since?—A. I have lived ever since (except two months) with Mr. Adams, of Poole.

Q. Have you ever seen any of the late Mr. Reed's brothers, or had any conversation with them?—A. I have not.

Q. Do you know Mr. Jefferies and Mr. Oaks, of Poole?—A. I do.

Q. Was not you promised a 100l. to come here?—A. I never was; Mr. Poole told me he would pay my expences.

Q. Where do you lodge?—A. I lodge at Mrs. Heath's, and sleep with her niece.

Q. You have seen Mr. Reed in Gloucester, where does he lodge?—A. At Mrs. Heath's.

Q. Did you not say before that you had not spoke to Mr. Reed? recollect yourself.—A. He met me and bid me good morning.

Q. Was you not with him in the street?—A. I went with the witnesses, and Mr. Reed went along, but I had no conversation with him.

Mr. YOUNG WEST, said he was a Surgeon at Poole; that he frequently saw Mr. Reed at that place, and that he appeared in a good state of health; that he had granted a certificate, as he was going to insure his life.

Mr. JOHN ALRIDGE, said he was agent, at Poole, to the Royal Exchange Assurance Office; that Mr. Reed, on or about the 11th of March, 1794, applied to him, as he wished to insure his own, and Mrs. Reed's life; and that by the time he had obtained an answer from London, Mr. Reed seemed determined to insure his own life only, for 2000l.

Mr. HENRY BROOK, said that he lives at Bristol, and is employed as an Agent by the Royal Exchange Company; that a young man of the name of Watkins came to him, and desired him to go with him to the Pelican Inn, which he did, and found Mr. and Mrs. Reed, and two or three children there; that a letter was delivered

to him from Mr. Aldridge, of Poole, identifying the person of Mr. Reed ; and that he wrote to the office, to make out the policy, in the name of Mr. instead of Mrs. Reed ; that Mr. Reed appeared to be in good health, and that he never saw him before or since : He further said, that he received a premium of 48l. 10s. on the 2d of April, 1794, and that an annual payment of 48l. 10s. was to be made for seven years ; and that if Mr. Reed died within that time, Mrs. Reed was to receive 2000l.

Mrs. ELIZABETH SYDNEY, lives at the Crown Inn, Newport, said that she remembers Mr. Reed, his wife, and two children, with Mr. Watkins, coming to her house on Wednesday, the 2d of April, where they staid till the Saturday following: that no Physician attended Mr. Reed, as he seemed very well, and walked out ; and that Mr. and Mrs. Reed appeared very happy together.

Mrs. SARAH PECKER, lives at Berkeley, and says, that on the 5th of April, 1794, Mrs. Reed's brother came to take lodgings ; that he hired two rooms, a lodging room and a kitchen; that in the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Reed, two little girls, and Mrs. Reed's brother came ; that Mr. Reed walked from Newport, and appeared to be troubled with no complaint, nor did any medical person attend ; that soon after, Watkins said they wanted a more private house ; she said they waited on themselves, and that she never saw a more happy couple than Mr. and Mrs. Reed; that Watkins seemed of a hasty temper, and that Mrs. Reed said, she would give the world if her brother was as good as her husband.

PHOEBE KNIGHT.

Q. Where do you live ?—A. I live at Swanley, nearly opposite to the house where Mr. Reed lived ; my house is the only one near it.

Q. Does any one live with you ?—A. Esther Munday lives in a part.

Q. Is there much travelling near your house ?—A. In the summer time, but not in the winter.

Q. Did you observe whether Mr. Reed was in good health ?—A. He appeared to be so ; I saw him on the morning of the 17th ; he was walking out ; about four o'clock I heard a little noise in Mr. Reed's bed-chamber,

Q. Where was you then?—A. I was standing without; I observed the window curtain was let down; after that, the curtain was opened, and I saw Mr. Reed look out of the window; just before that I heard a scringing.

Q. What do you mean by scringing?—A. It was like the noise of one crying out; Mr. Reed appeared at the window—his face was bloody.

Q. What happened after that?—A. Mrs. Reed came to the door and beckoned with her finger; I went, and found her tying his head up with a hankerchief: I asked what was the matter: Mr. Reed replied, I think we are all going mad.

Q. What else did he say?—A. He said he had been eating some soup made in a new tin kettle, and he asked me if there was any harm in tin without seasoning. I replied, no sir; he said he was very sick; he then said, that the blows on the head was given him while he was laying on the bed, and that he should have been killed, but the bed-post received some of the blows; he then asked me if I had seen a youth go out of the house—I said, no sir, only a young man in a blue coat, with something in a tea cup.

Q. Do you know who the young man was?—A. Mrs. Reed's brother.

Q. What time of the day was it?—A. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon.

Q. Was you told what was in the cup?—A. Mr. Reed said, that it was some brandy he had been to Newport for.

Q. Did you hear any more, how the blows was given?—A. I heard Mr. Reed ask his wife if she had seen how many times he had been struck, but she did not answer; both of them desired to have a doctor sent for. I told them I could send for Mr. Jenner, Berkeley.

Q. Did you send for him?—A. I did and asked if I could do any thing for him. Mr. Reed said no, and I went home; at night Mrs. Reed came and asked me if I could send for the doctor again. I asked if Mr. Reed was worse; she said no, but that he did conceit that he should die if the doctor was not sent for; she went away, but came again, and said, I will order a chaise, and go with you to fetch Mr. Jenner with all speed. I told her that would take up more time than to go across the fields: she de-

fired me to set off directly ; but I had not got above a quarter of a mile, when my husband called me back, and bid me go to Mrs. Reed, as she had told him her husband was dead.

Q. What did you see when you went in?—A. Mrs. Reed was down stairs a crying and told me her husband was dead ; I bid her not be frightened, he might be only in a fit ; she bid me go and see him. I went to him, and told her I thought he was dead. By Mrs. Reed's desire I sent for some people to lay him out.

Q. How long was you there?—A. About half an hour.

Q. Did you send for some people?—A. I did send for Dame Trotman and Dame Denley, who went up to Mr. Reed's room, but coming down again, said that they thought he was not quite dead.

Q. What did Mrs. Reed say?—A. She said but little, but cried and grieved.

Q. Did you hear her say any thing about her brother?—A. Yes ; I asked her, when the women were up stairs, what he had left the house for ? She replied, that her brother said, that he would not live in the house where such a villain as Mr. Reed was, as he (Watkins) had lent him 300l. and had nothing to shew for it.

Q. Was Mr. Reed laid out?—A. He was laid out about one o'clock.

Q. Did you hear any thing said about some birds?—A. I heard the twittering of a bird like a Robbin, before the gentleman was laid out : Mrs. Reed said, hark at the robbins, they whistled so all last night, I have had my such symptoms of my husband's death.

Q. Did you keep a dog?—A. I had a dog, and it died the morrow morning after Mr. Reed died.

Q. Where did you see the dog?—A. I saw it lying dead on his side under the hay-mow, about 100 yards from my house.

Q. Did you observe any thing the matter with the dog, the day before?—A. I did not ; I had a hen died the next week much swelled in the craw.

Q. Is it usual to lay out people as soon as they are dead?—A. Is it usual to lay out persons when they are warm.

HESTER MUNDAY.

Q. Where do you live?—A. Near the last witness.

Q. When was you at Mr. Reed's house?—A. I was there the day the man died; I went for Mr. Jenner.

Q. Did you see Mr. Reed?—A. I did, after the surgeon was gone; he was at the front door; I saw him vomit, and bring up a large quantity of stuff, which fell upon the stones.

Q. At what time was this?—A. It was about half an hour after the surgeon was gone; Phœbe Knight's dog followed me in at the door, where the man reach'd, and I saw him eat some of the stuff the man had cast from his stomach.

Q. Where were the children?—A. In another room.

Q. Did you hear any noise?—A. I heard a tap at the window; Mrs. Reed sent me to cover the children, when I came down she was not there; I called to her, and she said she was coming.

Q. Did you see Watkins?—A. I saw him with Mrs. Reed; they were close together.

Q. Did you hear him say any thing?—A. I heard him say he would go and seek a place, and would write a letter, and send it such a day.

Q. Did you hear him mention the place he intended to go to?—A. I did not.

Q. Did he appear angry?—A. I cannot tell.

Q. When you saw Mr. Reed vomit, what time of the day was it?—A. It was after sun-set.

DANIEL KNIGHT.

Q. What are you?—A. Phœbe Knight's husband.

Q. Did you keep a dog?—A. I did.

Q. When did you see the dog?—A. I saw him go with my wife, towards Mr. Reed's house.

Q. Did the dog seem well?—A. He seemed as well as usual.

Q. When did you see the dog again?—A. I saw him by the stack of hay, he was stiff and dead; I observed that he had vomited in three or four places, and some of it was hanging to the dog's jaw, which I struck away with a prong, and threw it into the ditch.

Q. What did you do with the dog?—A. I buried him ; but the next day dug him up, when Mr. Joyner the Coroner, came with the Jury.

Q. Who lived in the house before Mr. Reed took it ?
—A. One John Matthews, a farrier.

JOHN LEWIS gave in evidence, that in the month of April, on the day Mr. Reed died, he was at work digging potatoes, that James Watkins came up to him, and asked him if he knew a place called Swanley ; that upon his saying yes, Watkins asked him if he would go to Mr. Reed's and bring away a box—that he immediately replied, I will if you will give me a shilling—Watkins replied, I will give you half a crown, that he agreed to go, and upon going to the house he saw Mrs. Reed, and told her that a man in a blue coat and white stockings, had sent him for a box ; that she asked him where he was, and that he replied about a mile and a half off, that Mrs. Reed said, that she would not let the box go, till such time as the young man, who was her brother, would come to the house ; and that she bid me tell him, that Mr. Jenner had been there, and that Mr. Reed was in a likely way to do well ; that upon this, he went back and brought Watkins with him, who went into the house the back way ; that in a few minutes after Mrs. Reed came out of the house, and said that her husband was dead ; that he observed Mrs. Reed and Watkins, close by the house, a talking together, for about five minutes ; that Mrs. Reed desired him (Lewis) to follow her, and she gave him a box, which he took to Mr. Watkins, and that he took out of it what he pleased, when Lewis took the box back again ; that before they parted, Mrs. Reed and Watkins clasped each other round the neck, kissed and wished each other well ; that when he went to her first, she was in tears, and seemed much troubled ; that he walked several miles with Watkins, and put him in the right way for Gloucester.

DANIEL HADLEY.

Q. Where do you live ?—I live at Newport.

Q. Did you know the late Mr. Reed ?—A. I did ; he rented a house of me.

Q. Did you see Mr. Reed, a day or two before his death?—A. I did; he saw me in the fields and came to me, and asked me to put a cistern in the out-house; I went on the morrow with the overseer; Mrs. Reed was sitting at the door; Denley, who was there, said I was coming to you to make a coffin.

Q. What are you?—A. I am a Carpenter; Mrs. Reed then said, I must get you to make a coffin, for my husband is dead, and you must make it immediately; I went to measure the corpse, and she told me she must bury him immediately, for he was full of liquor, and would not keep.

Q. Are you sure you was to make it that day?—A. I will not be certain, whether she meant the same night, or the next morning.

Q. How did the corpse appear?—A. I found it a fair corpse, the head was tied up, and the room washed; she said she must have a cheap coffin, for her pocket was low; I said, you cannot bury him immediately, it is rumoured about, that blows have passed between him and your brother, therefore the Coroner will certainly come and take an inquest; she told me she did not know the meaning of it; I told her it was to examine how he came by his death.

Q. What did she say?—A. She wrung her hands, and said, what a distressed creature am I.

Q. Did she say any thing else?—A. She said that he did not die through the blows he had received, but with a disorder in his stomach; I was present when the Coroner was there, and told Mrs. Reed that he had intercepted a letter, written by the man whom she called her brother; she said, she hoped she should have the honour of opening her own letter.

Q. Did she open it?—A. She did; and as soon as she had read it, she dropt on her knees, and said, My God, I know nothing of the writing.

Q. Did you go afterwards to the house?—A. I did on the Monday morning, and found a number of people there; Mrs. Reed was selling the goods herself, and was walking about; she seemed in a hurry.

Q. Do you know Watkins's hand-writing?—A. I do;

for when he took the house, I desired him to write the agreement between us—he told me he could not write : but as I did not chuse to let the house, unless an agreement was entered into, he wrote the agreement; I told him he wrote very well; he said he'd shew me better than that—he wrote some words, which I told him was Latin, and that there was something of poison mentioned in it.

Q. What did he say?—A. He said it was a receipt to destroy a dog; he said, he had either sent, or would send for it.

Q. How came you to know that one of the words was Latin?—A. I had seen such words at Mr. Earl's, upon some of the things.

Mr. JOYNER.

Q. What are you?—A. I am Coroner; on the 19th of April, 1794, I attended at Swanley, and had Mr. Reed's body opened.

Q. Was Mrs. Reed there?—A. She was.

Q. What do you know of a letter?—A. I found a letter in the office, directed for Mrs. Reed; when I came to her, I told her that I had intercepted a letter, which I supposed was from her brother—she said she hoped that she should have the honour to open her own letter—she took it, and opened it.*

Q. What was the date of it?—A. April the 18th.

Q. How did she appear after reading the letter?—A. She seemed very much agitated, and said she did not know where it came from.

Q. In what part of the house was she, and what was she doing?—A. She was up stairs; I did not see her doing any thing.

* To Mrs. REED, Swanley, near Berkeley.

Gloucester, April 18th, 1794.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I ARRIVED here this morning with great difficulty; it grieves me to think what a situation we are in, with three small babes—But considering all things, we shall be better off than in that place—Be true, my dear, and we shall overcome all—Damnation take the flincher—I think myself safe when I be with you—I hope we shall be happy, and better off than with the old fellow; God rest his soul—Do not we receive the 2000l.—May God be our guide and protector—Direct for me, to be left at the Post-office, till called for—I am sincerely your's,

Q. Did you search Mr. Reed's house for poison?—A. I did seek for poison, and poisonous ingredients, but found none.

Q. Was you there when the Surgeon opened the body?—A. I was; I also found Mr. Reed's Will, and the Insurance Policy.

JOSEPH SIMS said, that he went to the house of the late Mr. Reed, at Swanley, and knocked at the door which was opened by Mrs. Denley; that Mrs. Reed soon after coming in, he said, "Madam, I am sorry for what has happened;" and that Mrs. Reed replied, by saying, that Mr. Reed was a dying man, four hours before any thing had happened.

Mr. JENNER.

Q. What are you?—A. I am a Surgeon, and live in Berkeley.

Q. Do you remember being sent for to Mr. Reed?—A. On Thursday, the 17th of April, I was sent for to Mr. Reed's.

Q. At what time did you arrive there?—A. About six in the evening; when I found Mr. Reed sitting in a chair, with his elbow leaning on a table; he had a large wound on his head; soon after I entered the room, he became sick and vomited; I asked him if the blows he had received on the head, was the occasion of it; he replied no, for that he was sick before; he then asked me, if there was any harm in eating soup, that had stood in tin all night, I told him there was not.

Q. Did you examine the wound?—A. I did; it was two inches and a half in length—the scalp was hanging, and the skull quite bare; his eyes looked wild and inflamed.

Q. Could these appearances be caused by the blows?—A. No; I thought it was likely he had been drinking something; I asked him the question; he said he had been drinking some tea; Mrs. Reed said, that he had also had some brandy and water.

Q. Was the skull hurt?—A. No; there was no depression in the skull; while I was there, he became sick again and vomited; I asked him if he could say positively that the sickness was not occasioned by the blows he had

received ; he answered, No ! No ! I was very sick before, and in consequence of what has happened, I have great reason to think I have taken something : Mrs. Reed replied, that her husband was prejudiced against some soup, that had staid all night in a new tin ; she said she had put more Cayenne pepper in it, than she usually did ; she said, he had not been well for some time past, and that she wished him to consult me.

Q Did you ask what the blows were given with?—

A. I asked Mrs. Reed, and she said that her brother had given them with a broomstick, a few hours before ; I asked to see the broomstick, but it was not to be found, being either lost or burnt ; I was going to put some more questions about the soup, but Mr. Reed told me, he would more privately tell the whole ; I desired the people in the room to go out, but Mrs. Reed staid behind ; Mr. Reed wished for a chaise to go with me to Berkeley, but I persuaded him against it.

Q. I think you said, that he looked very much indisposed?—A, He appeared much dejected, languid and full of anxiety, and seemed in a good deal of pain in his stomach ; when I dressed his wounds, he wished to lie down ; the general debility I thought was owing to loss of blood ; he complained of a palpitation at his heart ; when he was got up stairs, and taken into his bed room, I wished him to take his cloaths off, but he appeared so weak, he wished to lie down ; I told Mrs. Reed, that if he was sick again, it would be proper to give him a little weak camomile tea, and to send to me again, in an hour or an hour and an half.

Q. When did you come again?—A. On the 19th, when I attended the Coroner's Inquest.

Q. What did you do, when the Coroner held his inquest?—A. I examined the wounds in the head ; I then removed a proper portion of the skull, to examine the brain : I first looked to see if I could find any depression ; I found all the appearances natural ; the skin of the brain was complete : I then proceeded to examine the stomach ; the appearances were all natural in the upper part, but inflamed in the lower part, which had also spread into the intestines : I examined the inflammation

particularly, which appeared from something taken into the stomach, and not to any general illness.

Q. What is your opinion of Cayenne pepper, taken in a large quantity?—A. Cayenne pepper, I do not think, could cause in so short time an inflammation.

Q. What do you think would the appearance have been, if he had drank spirits?—A. If he had taken spirits, he would have been delirious.

Q. What do you think would have caused the inflammation?—A. A quantity of mercury would have done it; arsenic, if given in water, would have produced an inflammation.

Q. What did you observe in the stomach?—A. I found a quantity of liquid in the stomach; I gave some of the liquid to a dog of Giles's.

Q. How much did you give him?—A. I gave the dog about three table-spoonfuls, but in drenching him, some was spilt, as he made resistance; about half an hour after the dog began to be sick and vomited; I then gave him another dose, of about the same quantity as the first.

Q. How long did the second dose remain?—A. The second dose did not come away, but he appeared ill, became languid and weak, and his limbs were affected.

Q. When did you see the dog again?—A. I saw him in the evening, in a stable, at the Red Lion, in Newport; he appeared the same; I saw him again on the Monday following; he was very weak, and his hind parts almost paralatic, and he died on the Wednesday night.

Q. Did you open him?—A. I did, and found his stomach much inflamed, in the lower part; I dissected Knight's dog; the appearances in the stomach were similar to that of Giles's dog.

Q. What is your opinion of the cause of Mr. Reed's death?—A. I am of opinion, that Mr. Reed's death was caused by poison.

Q. What do you think of Cayenne pepper, taken in a larger quantity than usual?—A. I think it might be taken in such a quantity as to bring on an inflammation and death.

Mr. TYRE, Surgeon, of Gloucester, and Dr. JENNER

were next examined, relative to the nature and effects of arsenic, and of the quantity that would cause inflammation and death.

ROBERT GILES.

Q. Where do you live?—A. I live at the Red Lyon at Newport.

Q. Was you at Swanley, at the house of Mr. Reed?—A. I was there when Mr. Reed was opened by Mr. Jenner.

Q. Had you a dog there?—A. I took a dog with me from Newport; Mr. Jenner took something out of Mr. Reed's stomach, and gave part of it to the dog.

Q. How did the dog appear after this?—A. He was taken with a sickness and staggering: he had a little more given him.

Q. Where was the dog taken to?—A. He was tied in a stable.

Q. Did he eat any food?—A. I took some to him, but he would not take it, nor take any notice of it, but lay as if he was dead; when he was taken out to have some water, he staggered and went reeling, and died on the Thursday following.

Q. How long had you the dog?—A. About six or seven years; Mr. Jenner opened him.

Q. Did you search Mr. Reed's house for poison?—A. I did, but found none.

Mr. TOWNSHEND produced Mr. Reed's will, wherein he bequeaths the sum of 6,500l. in the three per cents. to be divided among the children, appointing Mrs. Reed their guardian.

JANE DENLEY.

Q. At what time was you at Mr. Reed's?—A. I went there to assist in laying him out, on the Friday morning.

Q. Was any one there besides yourself?—A. Phœbe Knight came over, and brought some milk for the children's breakfast, and when I boiled the milk, I went to put it out for the babies, but could not find more than one basin, Mrs. Reed told me, that there was some soup in a basin, that was breaded for Mr. Reed; Phœbe

Knight brought it out, and I put bread and all on a plate, and afterwards put the soup in a large saucepan, and warmed it for my husband's breakfast, and he eat part of it.

GEORGE DENLEY.

Q. Was you at Swanley?—A. I was there the day after Mr. Reed died; I was ordered to go and tell the Doctor, that Mr. Reed was dead.

Q. Was you ordered to go for the Coroner?—A. Mrs. Reed ordered me to go.

Q. Was Hadley there?—A. He was in the house; I and Hadley were at the Coroner's.

Q. Can you tell which was there first?—A. I cannot tell.

Q. Do you think Hadley heard Mrs. Reed bid you go for the Coroner?—A. I cannot be certain, but I think that he was in the same room.

WILLIAM NIBBLETT.

Q. Where do you live?—A. I live at the Crown Inn, Newport.

Q. Do you know Mr. Giles?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you know his spaniel dog?—A. Yes.

Q. When did you see the dog?—A. I saw him on the Sunday, after they had given him the poison.

Q. How did he go along?—A. He was trotting along.

Q. Did he seem to be well?—A. I saw nothing the matter with him.

Q. Did you see the dog after?—A. I saw him again, between two and three o'clock.

Q. Had he a rope about his neck?—A. I did not observe, whether he had a rope or not, about his neck.

ANN DAVIES.

Q. Did you ever live in Mr. Reed's family?—A. I lived with them twelve months. Mr. Reed was absent seven months abroad.

Q. Did they agree well together?—A. They agreed very well; I believe her to be a very prudent honest woman.

Q. How long ago is it since you lived with them?—A. About three years.

Q. Did Mrs. Reed go out much?—A. She never used to go out of the house, except into the garden or to chapel.

ELIZABETH CHURCH.

Q. Where do you live?—I live at Newport, at the Crown Inn.

Q. Was Mr. Reed and his family at your house?—A. They were.

Q. How did Mrs. Reed behave to her husband?—A. She behaved very well to him.

Mr. REED.

Q. Are you brother to the deceased?—A. Yes.

Q. Had you not a notice sent to you to produce a letter here which you received from your late brother?—

A. I did receive a notice, but I have not got the letter; I received several from my brother.

Q. What was in the letter you were desired to bring?—

A. My brother mentioned his distressed situation; and that if he did not receive a supply of money, he certainly should destroy himself.

Q. When was the letter written?—A. Just before his death.

Here the Evidence closed, and Mrs. Reed who appeared in a very weak state, delivered in a paper, of which the following is an authentic copy :

“ MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

“ I, Mary Reed, at the bar, finding that the weakness of my health will not allow me to address you verbally, I here intreat you to cause this paper to be read in court; and to suffer an unfortunate woman to make the only defence left her, that of her innocence, which she trusts, through your clemency, will enable her to stand against power and false accusation; and my Lords and Gentlemen, give me leave to assure you, that in that innocence, I dare look up to the throne of mercy; and in the presence of my Almighty Judge, before whom I stand, and at whose Bar we must all give an account, I here, as in his, and your presence, most solemnly declare, that I never

directly or indirectly, was any way accessory to the death of my husband, whom I really loved, and if I am condemned, which God forbid, as it is for the sake of my poor children I wish to live :—But if otherways—I here positively and publicly lay my innocent blood to their charge, who have cited me to this tribunal, before which I now stand, full fraught with every respect for you Gentlemen, and by whom I am to be judged and tried ; and I rest in hopes, that I shall be by you returned to my dear children.”

Mr. JUSTICE LAWRENCE recapitulated the Evidence with his usual exactness, and after the Jury had retired, he desired them to be called again, and told them that two things were to be taken into their consideration:—First, what Mr. Reed told Mr. Jenner when he asked him to tell whether he thought that the blows he had received had caused the sickness, and Mr. Reed's replying, that he was sick before, and would tell him more when in private;—Secondly, as to the letter sent to his brother, wherein he talked of destroying him as his circumstances were bad ; and whether he had not taken the poison himself.

The Jury, after an absence of one hour and sixteen minutes, returned a verdict—NOT GUILTY.

THE END.

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